

## **Historic, Archive Document**

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# FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

A Series of  
Dramatizations  
of Better  
Land Use

No. 156 April 19, 1941 1:15 p.m. EST

"AN AMERICAN PEASANT"

**W·L·W CINCINNATI**

United States Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service  
Dayton · Ohio



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

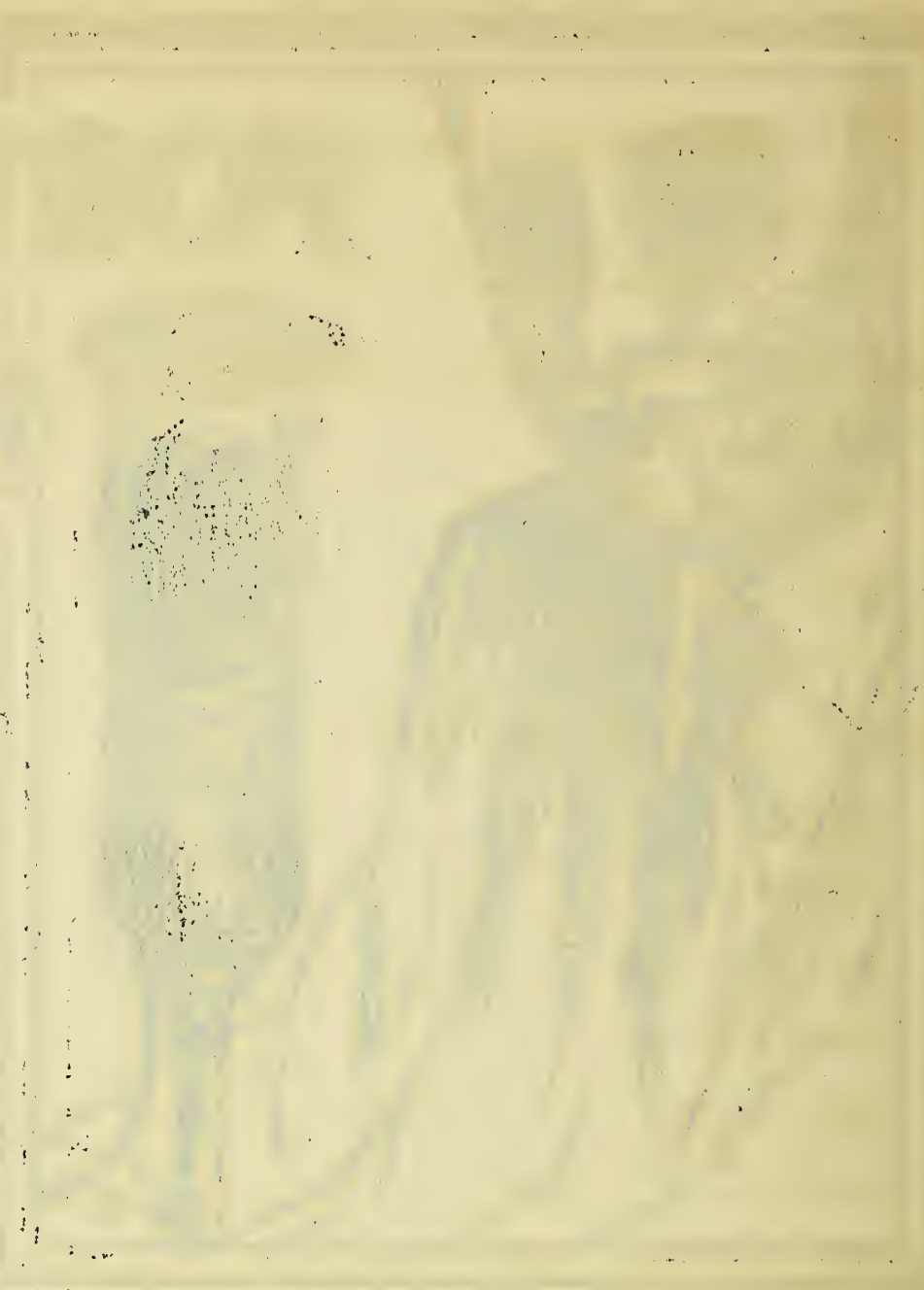
PHYSICS 311

LECTURE 1

LECTURE 2

LECTURE 3

LECTURE 4



NAME	
SECTION	
DATE	
SCORE	

WILLIAM J. VANDERKAM

PHYSICS 311, SPRING 2011

LECTURE 1

LECTURE 2

SOUND: Whistling wind...

VOICE

Black blizzards across the plains.

SOUND OFF MIKE: Woman coughing...

SECOND VOICE

Biting wind!

DEEP VOICE

Choking dust.

SOUND: Up wind, set fire...

VOICE

Havoc...

SECOND VOICE

Destruction...

DEEP VOICE

Waste...

SOUND: Up wind, kill fire, set flood...

VOICE

Floods rushing down the great valleys.

VOICES IN UNISON

Floods, drowning, killing, wasting...

SOUND: Up wind...

DEEP VOICE

The wealth of America washing and blowing away -- soil erosion!

SOUND: Clap of thunder....

ANNOUNCER

An American Peasant: the 156th consecutive episode of Fortunes  
Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

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ANNOUNCER

East of what was Poland, north of the fabulous Ukraine, lies one of the six Soviet Republics -- White Russia. Here is a land of many moods, varied topography, stretching from the Lysaya hills of the northwest to the low marshy plains of the southeast, ranging from the fine fishing streams of the Drut and the Berezina to the cut-over forests of pine and fir. White Russia probably was named because of the characteristic costume of the peasants: a white smock, white leggings, and white homespun coat. Land that once was Poland, land that once was ruled by Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, and Nicholas, Czar of all the Russias -- that is White Russia.

ORGAN: RUSSIAN FOLK SONG.

ANNOUNCER

In 1904, a lumbering, sea-swept boat approached the New York harbor, bringing hundreds of immigrants to the strange land of America. It had been a long voyage, a hard voyage, but Morris Alexander Bodkin had not complained. He was a short man, almost squat, but straight as a drill sergeant, and his eyes were toward the land of promise...(FADE)

SOUND: Blasts of steamboat whistle...

BODKIN (excitedly)

There she is! There she is!

O'TOOLE

There what is? Say, bloke, what's the matter with ye?

BODKIN

There....the statue of liberty.

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O'TOOLE

Faith, and a fine sight it is, a-standing up straight and tall like that, but nothing to get excited about. She ain't going to fall over on us.

BODKIN (to himself)

The statue of liberty.

O'TOOLE

You know, you're a funny bloke. All the way across, you never said much to anybody. Just sat there to yourself, looking ahead. But you're a nice one at that, I suppose.

BODKIN

Thank you.

O'TOOLE

Where you from?

BODKIN

Turov, near the Pripyat river. That's in White Russia.

O'TOOLE

Oh, a Russian, huh. How come you're heading for America?

BODKIN

It would take much time to tell you.

O'TOOLE

Then tell it? We've time.

BODKIN

I was a soldier under the Czar. I fought in the Boxer Rebellion. But then I married my Rose, and we have two fine children. It looked like we would soon be at war with Japan, and me, I do not like war. I knew I would be drafted. All of us must fight when there is war.



O'TOOLE

Aw, gwan! There's nothing like a good scrap. Why, these dukes have seen many a brawl. I love 'em.

BODKIN

Perhaps. But war is another matter. I was given a pass to visit friends in a nearby country, and, well...I just forgot to go back.

O'TOOLE

But what about your wife and kids?

BODKIN

Ah....my Rose...my little Phil and Lillian. As soon as I make my fortune, I will send for them.

O'TOOLE

You seem pretty confident of yourself. How're you going to make that fortune....farming, I suppose.

BODKIN

No, not farming. My wife, Rose...she knows more about farming than I do. Her father was a gardener by trade, but they lived in the forests. Forests....big ones, but already they are going.

O'TOOLE

We have forests in Donegal too...but what do you mean...they're going?

BODKIN

Cutting, my friend, always cutting. Slashing on all sides, without thought of the future. It is too bad. The soil of White Russia is not generally favorable to agriculture, except for livestock. But, pardon,...you asked my trade. I am a pattern maker. With these hands I make a living, and I will make a good one. You see, this is America....America.

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

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ANNOUNCER

The years were kind to Morris Alexander Bodkin and his capable hands. Working in Tennessee, in Kentucky, his fortunes swelled...

ORGAN: FLURRY

BODKIN

Ah! Real American money...the largest check I've had so far!

ORGAN: FLURRY

BODKIN

So much work I can't do it all!

ORGAN: FLURRY

VOICE

There's your deposit slip, Mr. Bodkin. Say, your credit will be good anywhere!

ORGAN: FLURRY

BODKIN

Rose! Let me look at you! Ah, Rose, at last you're here with me...in America.

ORGAN: FLURRY AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

The years rolled by, and 1932 found Morris Bodkin a respected owner of a building supply business in Campbell County, Kentucky... Morris Bodkin, the man who fled from the Czar, who, with his own hands, had made a business with a credit rating of \$150,000. But those were fateful days...(FADE)

SOUND: Occasional clinking of dinner dishes...

ROSE

Why so quiet tonight, Morris?

BODKIN

Eh....oh, am I quiet?



ROSE

So much. Troubles?

BODKIN

Nothing to speak of.

ROSE

Now you listen to me, Morris Bodkin. I've worked with you and for you, and I always will. Now tell me the truth. Troubles?

BODKIN

Troubles, Rose. You know that land I bought on the edge of Newport...

ROSE

...and built twenty houses on it. Fine ones, they are.

BODKIN

Rose, we're finished. This depression has ruined us. Now we have twenty mortgages on our hands. I may as well tell you the facts. All we have left is about \$100 in cash, odds and ends of building material, that old power-boat engine...

ROSE

Oh.

BODKIN

And us.

ROSE

When did this happen?

BODKIN

Last week. Rose, I tried to keep it from you, I kept thinking something would happen to change it all. Well, I found out where I can buy a farm up in Ross County, Ohio -- on credit.

(LAUGHING BITTERLY) At least my credit is good for that.





ROSE

Morris, you know I'll help you in every way. It must be a good farm.

BODKIN

Good farm? Wait til you see it! We're going there next week...

(FADE)

SOUND: Caw-caw of crows....

ROSE (puffing)

Oh, I'm all out of breath.

BODKIN

It's a steep climb.

ROSE

Is....this...it?

BODKIN

This is it. This is where I came to die.

ROSE

Oh, Morris...

BODKIN

Not much, is it?

ROSE

Why, the weeds and the brush are so thick there isn't room enough to sit down. And this shack...

SOUND: THREE or four boards falling down....

ROSE

Oh!

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BODKIN (calmly)

This is where we'll have to live for a few months, my Rose. We'll have to sleep in this little shed until I can build a house, and a barn. It will be cold, but we won't go hungry. Here, on this land where I came to die, we can grow everything we need. Here, we will forget our troubles.

ROSE (sobbing)

Yes, we will that. And now, do you mind so much if I cry a little? (CRIES).

BODKIN (consoling)

There, there, my Rose. Someday, you'll like it up here....up on a hill farm, where troubles are long forgot.

ROSE

Yes, Morris...someday....

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC....

ANNOUNCER

That was 1932. This is 1941. And if you go up into those hills and dales, among Potts Hills and California Hollow, Twin Tongue and the many other tributaries of Paint Creek and the Scioto River, you'll find a happy couple....

SOUND: Small gasoline motor starting and stopping, then dying out completely...

ROSE

What's the matter with it?

BODKIN

Just needs gasoline. Well, that means I'll have to go to Bainbridge tomorrow. Twice a year we have to go now, salt for the cattle, gasoline for the motor that gives us electricity....and seed for your garden. Why don't you raise your own seed? I do.





ROSE

A fine gardener's daughter I am. Already the radishes should have been planted.

BODKIN

Never mind, my Rose. It was you that helped me pipe the water from the cistern. What a worker you are!

ROSE

It is well that we are workers. We are happiest when we are occupied.

BODKIN

Yes. Our children....in Hollywood, Cleveland, Wilmington... Philadelphia, all far away. They make money. But up here, where I came to die, I want to live. Not make money -- make a living, because that is safer.

ROSE

It is safer. Security is all that anyone should seek -- and we have it here. Soon the dogwood will be in bloom. The maples are already. We can look down upon the valley, see the cars go by, going where? Maybe they don't know.

BODKIN

Like daughter Lillian, when she came this way with her big new car from Hollywood.

ROSE

Yes.

BODKIN

It was good to see her. And it's good to see this, Rose....a handful of dirt.

ROSE

Not dirt, Morris...soil....



ORGAN: SNEAK IN SYMBOLIC MUSIC

BODKIN

Soil...the lifeblood of America. America, the land of promise. Rose, I came to this farm because I wanted to die. I want to live, now, but I still want to die, when my time comes, on this farm.

ROSE

I know. Up here, we have no troubles. We are at peace with the world. This is our land.

BODKIN

Our land. Not much, Rose, considering some of the big farms -- but it's our land to have and to hold. I, Morris Alexander Bodkin, will do my part to keep the good land good. America is a good country. We must keep it good.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Morris Alexander Bodkin and his wife, Rose, emigrants from Russia and farmers of Ross County, Ohio. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

And it's a swell story, \_\_\_\_\_. I was on the farm last week with Neal McCoy -- he's the superintendent of the Chillicothe CC camp, and Roy Roller, who's done so much to help some 220 farmers that are now cooperating with the camp.

ANNOUNCER

And my natural question would be, what's he doing in the soil conservation line?





JONES

A nice job, \_\_\_\_\_. First, he is maintaining a sound fertility program by the use of lime and careful handling of farm manures. He keeps practically every acre in grass -- hay for his purebred livestock. What little land that is cultivated is tilled on the contour, with small strips of grass in between the corn rows to slow up run-off. Finally, he has put an end to the gullies that were present on the farm when he came there by building small rock check-dams. He's a good farmer.

ANNOUNCER

A self-sufficient farmer, I'd say.

JONES

Self-sufficient is the word. His plow handles were made from wood cut on the farm. His saw has a handle that he made from a crook in an apple tree limb. The runners on the sled are made from an old automobile frame. He has built his own electricity system from the discarded motorboat engine. Well, self-sufficient really is the word.

ANNOUNCER

Ewing, I'd like to visit that farm myself someday. I believe it would be an education in itself.

JONES

An education and an inspiration. And now, \_\_\_\_\_, how about some news from other portions of the conservation world?

ANNOUNCER

Fine and dandy.

JONES

Here's an item I wish you'd read. It shows you how farmers are working toward soil conservation these days.

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ANNOUNCER

All right, Ewing. Alabama this week -- well, this is something -- Alabama this week became the first state with every acre of farm land in soil conservation districts -- those legally authorized farmer cooperatives for conservation. Beginning in June, 1939, farmers in county after county have gone to the polls and voted for soil conservation districts. A week ago the farmers of 15 counties voted and their ballots -- overwhelmingly in favor of district organization -- fill in the last gaps in the state soil conservation map.

JONES

And I might add that 41 states have now passed legislation authorizing these soil conservation districts. Only two agricultural states have not passed this law -- Missouri and Ohio.

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER

JONES (on cue)

Well neighbors, next week "Fortunes Washed Away" begins its fourth year on the air. You've been mighty kind to us, and we hope these little lessons of soil conservation have been in some way, helpful to you. So speaking for Gene Charles and Hal Jenkins, who have worked with me in bringing you these true stories of soil conservation, and speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture -- our sincere thanks.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

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